Guidance Document for School Improvement Grant (SIG) Funding and the SIG Application Process for the 2017-2018 School Year

Office of College and Career Readiness

Division of Innovation

Rhode Island Department of Education

Draft Release Date: March 31, 2017

Final Release Date: April 14, 2017

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SIG Application Process for the 2017-2018 School Year

I.   Overview

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is soliciting *Applications for 2017 School Improvement Grants (SIG),* a federal grant program that will provide funding to increase the academic achievement of children in Rhode Island's lowest performing schools that are currently classified as "focus" or "priority".

School Improvement Grants (SIG), also known as 1003(g) funding, were authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6303 (g)), for the expressed purpose of providing public school districts with additional funds and resources to assist in improving the student achievement and academic outcomes at their lowest performing schools. Applicants may select to use the funds to implement one of the following seven intervention models. Funds may be used for salaries, fringe benefits, instructional materials, professional development, purchased services, or other expenses related to school improvement reform efforts based on a school needs assessment.

School Improvement Grant Intervention Models	
Turnaround	Restart
Closure	Transformation
Evidence-based whole school reform model	Early learning model
State-approved model: Empowered leadership	

RIDE is looking to fund bold and transformative initiatives that will result in dramatically increased student achievement. Innovation for innovation's sake is not enough—outcomes for student achievement must also be pursued relentlessly. Applicants should push their thinking, and aim to implement an impactful, coherent initiatives that holistically focus on school and district needs, while also thinking differently about how to meet those needs. In a departure from a piecemeal, school-by-school strategy of improving outcomes for students, RIDE desires to see districts both partnering across lines of difference and sharing best practices in bold and innovative new ways. Districts should aim to integrate and simplify processes and procedures, all the while communicating consistently, clearly, and coherently.

RIDE will fund the most meaningful proposals that make new commitments to accelerate student performance; this funding will be substantial, granted in three-year implementation periods to begin immediately, and offer the option of a planning year. Additionally, RIDE will preference the state-approved model: empowered leadership.

While there are many important components to the SIG application submission, any strong and coherent plan should include close attention to these three: a comprehensive needs assessment, family and community input, and a logic model. The application should articulate a plan to analyze the needs of the district and/or school(s) in the form of a comprehensive needs assessment, including but not limited to analyzing the needs of instructional programs, school leadership, school infrastructure, and any needs identified by families and the community. To that end, it is essential that families and communities are not merely engaged, but that their priorities and suggestions be part of the application submission. Their input is a critical part of collective investment in this process. Finally, there should be a clear, compelling, and logical connection between the selected intervention plan and the needs identified through this process. The inclusion of a logic model will help to articulate how the planned work will produce the intended results. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Krystafer Redden at Krystafer.Redden@ride.ri.gov.

II.   Grant Oversight and Financial Support

As part of the federal FY15 and FY16 budget, the United States Department of Education has allotted $3.3M to support the turnaround of Rhode Island's lowest performing schools

Title I funded schools that are identified as "priority" and "focus" based on Rhode Island's 2016 Accountability Classifications are eligible to apply for School Improvement Grants. Eligible schools are:

District	School
Central Falls	• Central Falls Senior High School • Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School • Veterans Memorial Elementary School
East Providence	• Agnes B. Hennessey Elementary School • Orlo Avenue Elementary School
Pawtucket	• Charles E. Shea Senior High School
Providence	• Alan Shawn Feinstein at Broad Street Elementary School • Asa Messer Elementary School • Carl G. Lauro Elementary School • Central High School • Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School • Esek Hopkins Middle School • Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School • George J. West Elementary School • Gilbert Stuart Middle School • Governor Christopher DelSesto Middle School • Harry Kizirian Elementary School • Hope High School • Juanita Sanchez High School • Lillian Feinstein at Sackett Elementary School • Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School • Mt. Pleasant High School • Nathan Bishop Middle School • Pleasant View Elementary School • Providence Career & Technical Academy • Robert L. Bailey IV Elementary School • Roger William Middle School • Young & Woods Elementary School
State	• Rhode Island School for the Deaf

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III.   **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding School Improvement Grants**

1) Who is eligible to apply?
Title I funded schools identified as "priority" or "focus" through RIDE's 2016 Accountability Classifications are eligible to apply.

2) How much will be awarded to successful applicants?
RIDE anticipates funding proposals at the requested amount to successfully develop and implement their proposed program.

3) How long is the award grant period for successful applicants?
Grants will be awarded for three to four years, depending if a proposal selects to use an initial planning year. If a school improves to such a degree that it is eligible to exit transformation status while RIDE undergoes the transition to ESSA, the funds will continue to be awarded as granted and as planned.

4) How will the applications be reviewed and scored?
Applications will be reviewed and scored by team composed of RIDE employees, using the publicly available Rhode Island School Improvement Grant 1003 (g) Application Rubric.

5) How will grant awardees be monitored or reviewed?
RIDE will monitor grant recipients on a continual basis throughout the award period. This monitoring will be part of the current, ongoing, school improvement monitoring process, and will include reviewing data, reviewing progress on the school improvement plan, and conducting on-site visits.

6) How does the "Empowered Leadership" state-approved model align to "Empowerment Schools"?
Previously, Rhode Island was one of only a handful of states that submitted a state-developed model of school improvement to the U.S. Department of Education for approval. This model—submitted and approved by the federal government prior to the passage of the School & Family Empowerment Act in the Rhode Island General Assembly—is called the state-approved model: empowered leadership. A school does not necessarily need to be an Empowerment School at the time of the application in order to utilize the state-approved: empowered leadership model. However, these two approaches are complementary. For example, a school may select the empowered leadership model, and then use the planning year to design and proceed through the locally-driven Empowerment School application process.

IV.   **School Improvement Grant Program Timelines**

School Improvement Grants will be implemented by RIDE's Office of College & Career Readiness for the purpose of accelerating the turnaround of Rhode Island's lowest performing schools.

| Application Timeline			
Application Released		March 31, 2017	
Applications Due		May 31, 2017	
Results Announced		June 20, 2017	
Grant Funding Timeline			
Standard Application - No Planning Year		If Planning Year Selected	
Implementation Year 1	SY 2017-18	Planning Year (Year 0)	SY 2017-18
Implementation Year 2	SY 2018-19	Implementation Year 1	SY 2018-19
Implementation Year 3	SY 2019-20	Implementation Year 2	SY 2019-20
		Implementation Year 3	SY 2020-21

V.   Program Priorities and Goals

RIDE will fund applications that:

- ☐   Implement one of the seven intervention models
- ☐   Provide a detailed high quality needs analysis that considers the needs of families and the community, project plan including goals, implementation milestones and a plan for oversight and support for implementing the selected intervention model
- ☐   Build upon the school(s)/district's turnaround commitments in their RIDE-approved School Reform Plan

Additionally, RIDE will prioritize the funding of proposals that utilize the state-approved empowered leadership model.

Ambitious, broad, bold goal-setting is an important component of the application process. RIDE is looking to fund applications that offer a clear logic model (see the example below from The Pell Institute & The Council for Opportunity in Education). The proposal or initiative should begin with an ultimate end goal in mind, and milestone goals along the way—both formative and summative—during the funding period.
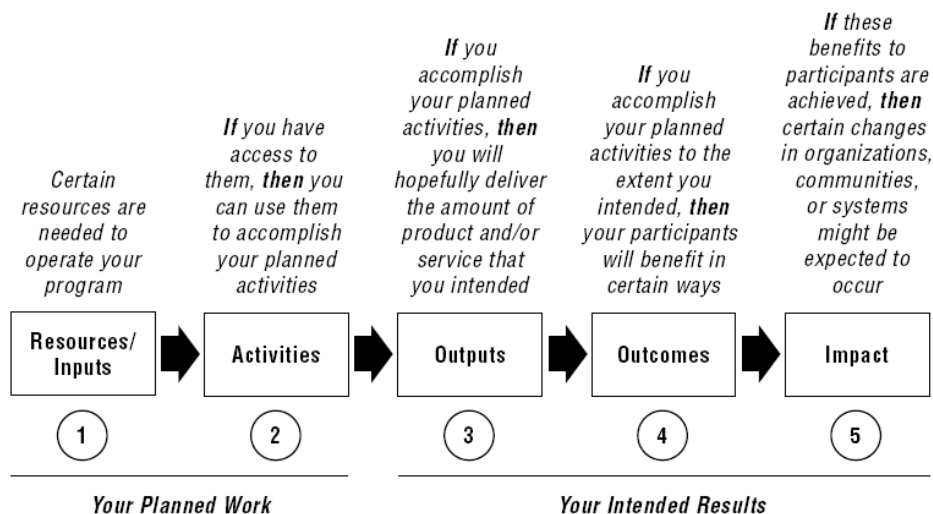
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VI.   Application

Applicant Coversheet: School Improvement Grants

Program Information

Name of District or Applicant *(enter text on line above)*		
Name of Program Lead		
Phone	Email	
Street Address	City	Zip Code

School Information

School Name	NCES ID #	Focus?	Priority?	Intervention Type?

Signatories

Program Lead			
	Printed Name	Signature	Date
Superintendent or Chief Executive			
	Printed Name	Signature	Date

Abstract
The abstract must not exceed one page, double-spaced. Please address how the application will accelerate the school transformation process for the identified school(s) beyond existing efforts.

Project Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative must not exceed 15 pages, double-spaced. Provide any charts, graphs, or examples in the proposal narrative needed to demonstrate adherence to the application requirements and selection criteria. Applicants must address both the application requirements and the selection criteria as developed in the rubric. The narrative must describe how the application will meet each of these requirements. To support and assist applicants in identifying external partners RIDE will maintain a list of interested partners. For support, please see to a sample project proposal narrative outline in Appendix C.

Each proposal narrative must describe the plan to:
- ☐ support standards based instruction
- ☐ develop and increase instructional leadership within the school
- ☐ promote the intentional integration of the school with the school's community and/or surrounding communities
- ☐ promote strategies that increase student participation in advanced coursework
- ☐ increase educator empowerment (if applicable)

Each proposal narrative must meet the following application requirements:
- ☐ The applicant has conducted a needs analysis that considers the needs of families and the community
- ☐ The applicant has developed a proposal that has been inclusive of parents and the school community
- ☐ The applicant has developed a proposal that is consistent with SIG model requirements
- ☐ The applicant has developed a proposal that includes and follows a clear logic model
- ☐ The applicant has developed a proposal that is rooted in research and evidence-based practices
- ☐ The applicant has committed adequate capacity and resourcing to support the proposal
- ☐ The applicant has developed a proposal that aligned other non-SIG resources
- ☐ The applicant has demonstrated that they are willing to align LEA practices and policies to support the proposal
- ☐ The applicant district has developed a system of oversight to support the proposal
- ☐ The applicant described a how families and the community will be involved in an ongoing basis
- ☐ The applicant has articulated a plan for the sustainability of the proposal beyond the grant period
- ☐ The applicant has developed a proposal that will implement at minimum one evidence-based strategy
- ☐ The applicant has developed a proposal that includes annual student achievement goals aligned to the state administered assessments
- ☐ The applicant has developed a proposal that has interim progress targets including leading indicators
- ☐ The applicant provided timelines delineating the beginning, and completion of all project goals
- ☐ The applicant has described the actions it will take to implement the requirements of the turnaround model
- ☐ The applicant demonstrates a rigorous selection process with a clearly articulated to progress targets for external partners, *if applicable*
- ☐ The applicant demonstrates how it recruit and screen and select external partners through a rigorous selection process with a clearly articulated to progress targets. The review must include a determination that the LEA selected the partner demonstrating their success with similar student populations of the school including but not limited to achieving significant improvement in the achievement for all students, success in closing achievement gaps, success in raising graduation rates, and have not experienced significant compliance issues including but not limited to civil rights, financial management, and student safety, *if applicable*
- ☐ The applicant described how the LEA intendent to use planning and pre-implementation time, *if applicable*
- ☐ The applicant described the rigorous review process for reviewing charter school operators, charter management organization, or educational management organization for schools that select the restart model, *if applicable*
- ☐ The applicant demonstrates that the whole school reform model developer provides evidence supporting student achievement in a setting similar to that of the applicant school, *if applicable*
- ☐ The applicant demonstrated evidence to support the selection of the empowered leadership model, *if applicable*

Budget
The budget narrative must not exceed 5 pages, double-spaced. Provide an itemized budget narrative for each budget category and detail on how the expenses support the activities described in the project narrative. This budget narrative should cover the entire three-year award period and complement Appendix B. Please provide additional clarification as deemed necessary.

VII. **Application Checklist**

Application requirements will be determined to either have been met or not met. Application selection criteria will be scored by a team of reviewers and will be used to award funding. Applicants must meet all application requirements in order to be awarded funding. A complete application submission will include, at the minimum, the following items:

☐ Application Cover Sheet *with signatures of the superintendent or chief executive of the applicant and district program lead*
☐ Program Assurances (Appendix A)
☐ Abstract *not to exceed one page, double-spaced*
☐ Project Narrative *not to exceed fifteen pages, double-spaced*
☐ Budget Narrative *not to exceed five pages, double-spaced*
☐ Budget Detail (Appendix B)

VIII. **Application Submission**

All applications—and any questions or concerns— should be submitted electronically to Krystafer.Redden@ride.ri.gov.

Appendix A: Program Assurances

A district and its entities must provide the following assurances as part of the application for a School Improvement Grant.

The district must assure that it will:

1. Use its School Improvement Grant to implement, fully and effectively, an intervention in each school that the district commits to serve consistent with final requirements;
2. Establish annual goals for student achievement that on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics and measure progress on learning indicators in order to monitor each school that it serves with the School Improvement Grant, and establish goals (approved by RIDE) to hold accountable its school(s) that receive school improvement funds;
3. If it implements a restart model in a school, include in its contact or agreement terms the authority to hold the charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization accountable for complying with the final requirements;
4. Monitor and evaluate the actions a school has taken, as outlined in the approved SIG application, to recruit, select, and provide oversight to external providers to ensure their quality;
5. Monitor and evaluate the actions a school has taken, as outlined in the approved SIG application, to sustain the reform efforts after the funding period ends and provide technical assistance to schools on how they can sustain progress in the absence of SIG funding;
6. Report to RIDE the school-level data required, including all relevant baseline data for the year prior to SIG implementation;
7. Ensure that each school that it commits to serve receives all of the state and local funds it would normally receive in the absence of these school improvement funds, as well as all other funds or resources that align with the proposed interventions.

The district agrees to these aforementioned assurances

_____ Yes

_____ No

Program Lead			
	Printed Name	Signature	Date
Superintendent or Chief Executive			
	Printed Name	Signature	Date

Appendix B: Budget Detail

A district and its entities must include a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds they will use in each year, in each type of identified school that they commit to serve. These funds should be used to: conduct district-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models, and to support school improvement activities at either the school or the district level, for each identified school in the district's application. Please note that a district's budget should cover all the years of full implementation and be of sufficient scope and size to implement the selected school intervention model in each school the district commits to serve. A district may fill out the first column (Year 0) as it sees fit, depending upon whether or not it is requesting a planning year for some or for all of the schools it proposes to serve.

It is important to note that district which has one of more priority schools located within its boundaries must serve all of these schools prior to serving one or more of its focus schools. Additionally, for Rhode Island SIG grants, a district may not receive more than four years of SIG funding to serve a single school. Finally, a district's budget for each year may not exceed the number of identified schools it commits to serve, multiplied by $2,000,000. The below budget should complement the budget narrative provided by the applicant.

LEAs should complete the below budget template for each school included in the submitted application:

School Expenditure	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21 (If FY2017-18 treated as a planning year, otherwise N/A)	Total
51000 Employee Compensation					
52000 Employee Benefits					
53000 Professional and Technical Services					
54000 Property Services					
55000 Other Purchased Services					
56000 Supplies and Materials					
58000 Miscellaneous					
Subtotal:					
60000 Indirect Costs					
57000 Property and Equipment					
Total					

Appendix C: Sample Project Proposal Narrative Outline

Section I: School Needs

1. Needs Assessment

    Describe how the district has analyzed the needs of the school, based on a needs analysis that, among other things, analyzes the needs identified by families and the community, and how the selected interventions align to the need. Describe the process used to determine the model selected to meet those needs and the logic model and comprehensive theory of change to address the needs of identified persistently low-achieving schools.

2. Family & Community Input

    Describe how the district has actively engaged with, collected information from, and taken into serious consideration family and community input in selecting the intervention.

Section II: Intervention Design

3. SIG Requirements

    Describe the actions that the district has taken, or will take, to design and implement a plan consistent with the final requirements of the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, transformation model, evidence-based whole school reform model, early learning model, or state-determined model. Describe the services the school will receive and/or what activities the school will implement using SIG funds.

4. Evidence-Based Strategies

    Describe how the district will implement, to the extent practicable, in accordance with its selected SIG intervention model(s), one or more evidence-based strategies.

5. External Providers *if applicable*

    The district must describe action it has taken, or will take, to recruit, screen, and select external providers to ensure their quality, and regularly review and hold accountable such providers for their performance.

6. Planning & Pre-Implementation

    Describe the planning and other pre-implementation activities, provide a timeline for implementing those activities, and describe how those activities will lead to successful implementation of the selected intervention.

7. Family & Community Engagement

    Describe how the district will meaningfully engage families and the community in the planning and implementation of the selected intervention on an ongoing basis, including leveraging their input for greater collective impact.

Section III: Goals

8. Monitoring

    Describe how the district will monitor identified school that receives school improvement funds, including by establishing annual goals for student achievement on state assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics.

9. Oversight & Support

    Describe how it will provide effective oversight and support for implementation of the selected intervention for the school the district proposes to serve (perhaps, for example, by creating a district turnaround office).

10. Accountability

    Describe how the district will hold the charter school operator, CMO, EMO, or other external provider accountable for meeting grant requirements.

Section IV: District Strategy

11. Capacity

    Describe the actions that the district has taken, or will take, to determine its capacity to provide adequate resources and related support to each identified school in the district's application in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected on the first day of the first school year of full implementation.

12. Resource Alignment

    The district must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to align resources with the selected intervention.

13. Practices & Policies

    The district must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively.

14. Sustainability

    Describe how the district will sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

Section V: Model Specific Questions

15. Whole-School Model

    Describe how the district will implement a model with evidence of effectiveness that includes a sample population or setting similar to the population or setting of the school to be served, and partner with a whole school reform model developer, as defined by the SIG requirements.

16. Restart Model

    Describe the rigorous review process the district has conducted or will conduct of the charter school operator, CMO, or EMO that it has selected or will select to operate and manage the school and/or schools.

17. Timeline

    The district must include a timeline delineating the steps the district will take to implement the selected intervention at the identified sc